

WO 2005/084787

PCT/GB2005/000867

20

CLAIMS:

1. A device for blending materials comprising a carrier support arranged to support a closed bag containing material to be blended, at least one
5 reciprocating kneading paddle having an extended position and being arranged to apply a kneading action to the walls of a supported bag for homogenising its contents, and adjustment means for controllably varying a spacing between the paddle when in its extended position and the carrier support.
- 10 2. A device according to claim 1 in which the adjustment means comprises a user operable control for use in varying the spacing.
3. A device according to claim 2 wherein the user operable control comprises a knob which is rotatable by the user to vary the spacing.
- 15 4. A device according to any preceding claim in which the adjustment means is arranged so that the spacing is variable during operation of the device.
5. A device according to any preceding claim in which the adjustment
20 means comprises a cam arrangement for varying the spacing between the extended paddle position and the carrier support.

WO 2005/084787

PCT/GB2005/000867

21

6. A device according to claim 5 in which the cam arrangement comprises a pair of interacting cam portions whose cam surfaces face one another.

7. A device according to claim 6 in which a first of the cam portions is mounted against rotation in the device and a second of the cam portions is mounted in the device for rotation relative to the first cam portion.

8. A device according to any one of claims 5 to 7 in which the cam portions are arranged so that relative rotation of the pair of cam portions causes a spacing between their respective mounting points to change.

9. A device according to claim 7 when dependent on claim 2 or claim 3 in which the second cam portion is rotatable by operation of the user operable control.

10. A device according to any preceding claim in which the device comprises a backing portion on which the carrier support is mounted.

11. A device according to claim 10 in which the carrier support is arranged for movement relative to the backing portion to change the spacing between the paddle when in its extended position and the carrier support.

WO 2005/084787

PCT/GB2005/000867

22

12. A device according to claim 11 when dependent on any one of claims 5 to 9 in which one of the cam portions is mounted on the carrier support and the other of the cam portions is mounted on the backing portion such that relative rotation of the cam portions causes the spacing between the carrier support and the backing portion to change, thus changing the spacing between the paddle when in its extended position and the carrier support.

13. A device according to claims 10 to 12 in which the device comprises a door which comprises the backing portion, the carrier support and the adjustment means.

14. A device according to claim 13 in which the backing portion comprises the outer surface of the door.

15. A device according to one of claims 13 and 14 when dependent on claim 2, in which the user operable control is provided at the outer surface of the door.

16. A device according to any one of claims 10 to 14 when dependent on claim 2 in which the control comprises a knob which is mounted to the second cam portion and protrudes through the backing portion.

WO 2005/084787

PCT/GB2005/000867

23

17. A device according to claim 15 or 16 in which the control comprises a knob for adjusting the paddle clearance which is provided on the door.

18 A sample bag comprising a generally triangular sample holding portion.

5

19. A sample bag according to claim 18 in which the triangular portion has curved sides.

20. A sample bag comprising a sample holding portion that comprises a sample collecting portion.

10

21. A sample bag comprising a sample holding portion and sealing means for sealing the sample holding portion until use.

22. A sample bag according to claim 21 in which the sealing means comprises a closure portion that is removable to allow access to the sample holding portion.

15

23. A sample bag according to any one of claims 18 to 22 which comprises a pair of generally rectangular sheets which are sealed together by a pair of seal lines to form the sample holding portion.

20

WO 2005/084787

PCT/GB2005/000867

24

24. A sample bag according to any one of claims 18 to 23 in which a sealing seal line is provided to seal the sample holding portion until use.

25. A sample bag according to claim 24 when dependent on claim 23 in which the sealing seal line is provided between the pair of seal lines forming the sample holding portion, so forming a sample receiving portion sealed against the ingress of material.

26. A sample bag according to any one of claims 18 to 25 in which one or more seal lines are applied to a generally rectangular bag to form the sample holding portion, and a further seal line is applied to seal the sample holding portion until use.

27. A method of preparing a sample comprising the steps of:
placing material in a sample bag comprising a generally triangular sample holding portion;
blending the material; and
extracting a sample from the bag by squeezing the bag to cause at least some of the contents to collect in an apex of the generally triangular sample holding portion and extracting the collected contents from the apex of the sample holding portion.

WO 2005/084787

PCT/GB2005/000867

25

28. Apparatus comprising a device according to any one of claims 1 to 17 and a bag according to any one of claims 18 to 26 wherein the width of the bag is substantially the same as the width of a paddle in the device which is arranged to contact the bag for blending of the contents.

5